

**INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**  
**2003 READING FIRST GRANT APPLICATION**

**ANNOUNCEMENT:**

The Indiana Department of Education is pleased to announce the 2003 Reading First grant. The grant is supported through the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. The Reading First grant provide \$10,326,725 to eligible local education agencies to establish evidence-based reading programs for students in kindergarten through third grade who are not achieving in reading. The LEA subgrants will be awarded through a competitive application process.

The subgrant application for the 2003 Reading First grant, containing necessary forms and instructions for completing the application, will be available at [www.doe.state.in.us/readingfirst](http://www.doe.state.in.us/readingfirst). Completed applications **must be documented by delivery agent for delivery on or before April 1, 2003**. An original and four (4) copies (for a total of five) of the complete application must be submitted at that time.

Questions regarding the 2003 Reading First grants may be directed to Jayma Ferguson, Reading First Director, (317) 232-9152 or [jferguso@doe.state.in.us](mailto:jferguso@doe.state.in.us).

## I. GENERAL INFORMATION

### INTRODUCTION

The purpose of Reading First is to ensure that all of America's children learn to read well by the end of third grade. It has long been recognized that teaching young children to read is the most critical educational priority facing this country. This is an area where some of the most rigorous scientifically based research is available. The Reading First subgrants will help districts apply this research—and the proven instructional and assessment tools consistent with the research—to teach all children to read. By effectively teaching all children to read well by the end of third grade, we ensure that all students advance to later grades well prepared to achieve their full academic potential.

The Reading First subgrants will provide the necessary assistance to districts to establish evidence-based reading programs for students in kindergarten through third grade. Reading First funds will also be focused on providing professional development to ensure that all teachers, including special education teachers, have the skills they need to effectively implement these programs. Additionally, the subgrants provide assistance to districts in preparing classroom teachers to effectively monitor the reading progress of students, identify children who are at risk of reading failure, and provide instruction to meet the needs of students.

Reading First supports methods of early reading instruction in classrooms that are proven effective by scientific research. The grant provides assistance to districts in selecting effective instructional materials, programs, learning systems, and strategies to implement proven methods to teach reading. Reading First also provides assistance for the administration of screening, on-going classroom-based reading assessments, and outcome assessments with proven validity and reliability, in order to measure where students are, monitor their progress, and inform instruction. Districts will also be provided help in the selection and administration of diagnostic assessments for a more in-depth analysis of a child's specific area of weakness to assist the teacher in determining the type of instructional strategies needed in the classroom.

Reading First provides an opportunity for eligible districts to implement reading programs that help all students achieve reading mastery by the end of third grade. The grant specifically supports districts to ensure teachers and administrators learn about scientifically based reading research, implement programs that are based on this research, and use rigorous assessments with proven validity and reliability that effectively screen, monitor, and evaluate all student to better focus on their individual needs.

Reading First focuses directly on instruction in the **regular classroom** as the most important teaching venue for early readers. Reading First does not aim to remediate small sub-groups of children in pull-out programs, or to provide instruction in any setting outside the main classroom environment. Reading First seeks to embed the essential components of reading instruction into all elements of the K-3 teaching structures of each eligible districts.

Scientifically based reading research (SBRR) has identified five essential components of reading instruction as phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. This research demonstrates that children need to master skills in these five interrelated areas in order to become proficient, successful readers. Reading First focuses instructional methods and materials, assessments, and professional development in these key areas. Programs funded under Reading First will have to demonstrate their ability to address these components in a comprehensive and effective manner.

The Reading First grant will provide the necessary assistance to local education agencies to:

- Establish evidence based reading programs for students in K-3;
- Focus instructional methods, materials, assessments, and professional development on the five essential components of reading instruction: phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension;
- Focus on providing professional development to ensure that all K-3 teachers, including K-12 special education teachers, have the skills they need to effectively teach these programs;
- Focus directly on instruction in the regular classroom;
- Prepare classroom teachers to effectively monitor the reading progress of students, identify students who are at risk of reading failure, and provide appropriate instruction to meet the needs of students through the use of screening, diagnostic, ongoing classroom assessments, and outcome assessments;
- Support best practice in methods of early reading instruction in classrooms that are proven by SBRR; and
- Select effective instructional materials, programs, learning systems, and strategies to implement proven methods to teach reading.

## **FUNDING PROCESS**

The Indiana Department of Education will make the Reading First subgrants available through a competitive process. (A **minimum** subgrant amount shall be an amount that bears the same relation to the funds made available under subsection (b)(4) as the amount the eligible LEA received under part A for the preceding fiscal year bears to the amount all the LEAs in the State received under part A for the preceding year.) [Title I, Part B, Subpart 1, Sec. 1202, (c) (2) (A).] Funds should be of sufficient size and scope to enable the LEA to improve reading instruction and should be related to the number or percentage of students in K-3 who are reading below grade level.

## **PRIORITY FOR FUNDING**

A priority of funding will be given to districts that demonstrate a clear need. In addition, LEAs must demonstrate a commitment from administrators, specialists, and teachers to implement the Reading First grant and sustain students' learning over time. Districts must show evidence that the District and the schools designated for funding have the capacity and the commitment to successfully implement **all** of the components of the

Reading First grant. A priority will also be given to school districts that demonstrate the ability to leverage existing reading and professional development resources. Federal statute requires priority to be given to LEAs with at least 15 percent of the students served from families with incomes below the poverty line, or at least 6,500 of the children served from families with incomes below the poverty line.

### **ELIGIBLE SCHOOL DISTRICTS**

The 2003 Reading First funds will be used to improve the teaching and learning of children, grades K-3 in schools located in districts with the highest percentages (35 percent or more) of K-3 children reading below grade level based on the third grade Indiana Statewide Testing of Educational Progress Plus (ISTEP+ 2001), and also in districts that have jurisdiction over at least one of the following:

- a) a geographic area that includes an empowerment zone or enterprise community,
- b) a significant percentage of schools identified for Title I school improvement, or
- c) the highest percentages of children who are counted for allocations under Title I, Part A.

Using this definition, sixty-five school districts (22 %) in Indiana have been identified as eligible to apply. This list ensures geographic diversity across the state including rural, urban, town, and suburban areas.

### **TARGET POPULATION**

Eligible LEAs must select which schools will be eligible to receive Reading First subgrant funds to provide services for students in kindergarten through grade three. The LEAs must rank them in order of need. Reading First funds are designated for activities to improve reading achievement for student in K-3 who attend low-performing schools with high concentrations of poverty and/or schools that are in Title I school improvement status. An eligible school district shall provide funds **only** to schools that both:

- are among the schools served by that eligible LEA with the highest percentages of students in kindergarten through grade three reading below grade level, based on the third grade 2003 ISTEP+; **and**
- are identified for Title I school improvement; **or**
- have the highest percentages or numbers of children counted under section 1124(c). [Title I, Subpart 1, Sec. 1202, (c) (6)].

### **EVALUATION FOR CONTINUATION**

Throughout each year, the reading performance of the students in grades K-3 will be evaluated to determine whether the Reading First programs is leading to greater success in reading. The evaluation will determine whether: 1) Reading First instructional strategies and methods are being implemented appropriately in K-3 classrooms; 2) the students are making adequate progress in reading; and 3) all components of the Reading First subgrant including professional development and technical assistance are being implemented.

Schools and LEAs that do not meet annual performance levels will receive technical assistance and, with assistance from the State, develop and implement an improvement plan that includes intense professional development. If participating schools do not meet performance levels by the end of the third year, the school and the LEA may be removed from the program. The Indiana Reading First program criteria for continuation is outlined on the following chart. A rating of less than 17 could cause a district to be discontinued from the program.

<b>Reading First Criteria for Continuation</b>							
<b>Category</b>	<b>Data Source</b>		<b>Performance Levels</b>				
			0	1	2	3	4
Improvement of student achievement	Disaggregated 3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade: ISTEP+ Data 2 <sup>nd</sup> Grade: Terra Nova - CAT Data		Scores Drop	0-≤1% gain	1-5% gain	5-10% gain	≥10% gain
Improvement of student achievement on progress monitoring assessments	Progress monitoring assessments increase in % of students demonstrating 80 – 90% by end of grade	1	% Drop	20%	30%	40%	>50%
		2	% Drop	20%	30%	40%	>50%
Improvement of student achievement on DIBELS™ DORF	# of words by the spring of each grade level	1	Drop	10	20	30	40
		2	Drop	<40	50-70	70-80	80-90
		3	Drop	<80	80-90	90-100	100-110
Professional development opportunities	Professional development log		≤40%	40-60%	61-70%	71-80%	81-100%
Transfer of professional development to classroom practice	Observation form – yearly increase in % observed on IC from Fall to Spr.		0%	>20%	>30%	>40%	>50%
Use of Technical assistance	Technical assistance log		1—4 days	5-9 days	10-14 days	15-19 days	20+ days
Implementation of SBRR, 5 components, and standards	Teacher's Log, Lesson plans, observation		Initial stage		Early stage		Mid- or high level
Efficient use of resources	% of unexpended funds		≥40%	31-40%	21-30%	11-20%	0-10%

## EVALUATION

The Indiana Department of Education will select an entity through an RFP process to develop and implement a comprehensive program evaluation of the Reading First grant and the Reading First subgrants. All funded programs will be required to participate as requested in the evaluation. Data will be collected throughout the term of the grant, and all grantee districts and selected schools must participate in the data collection.

## REJECTION OF PROPOSALS

The Indiana Department of Education reserves the right to reject any proposals received as a result of this announcement and will do so if the proposal does not adhere to funding specifications or application preparation instructions.

## CLOSING DATE AND DELIVERY ADDRESS

The ORIGINAL application bearing ORIGINAL signatures and FOUR (4) COPIES (for a total of 5) of the complete application **must be delivered or post-marked on or before April 1, 2003.**

Acceptable packaging and mailing procedures are:

- The postmark or other mailing validation must be documented on or before April 1, 2003. The original and copies should be enclosed in a sealed envelope within the mailing package.
- When the grant application is received, the check-in box on the front of the application will be signed by the Reading First administrative assistant. Verification of receipt of the application will be faxed to the applicant. The applicant is responsible for contacting the Reading First office (317 232-9164), if the applicant does not receive a fax by April 7, 2003.
- In case of late delivery of the grant application, verification of appropriate delivery efforts will be required to participate in the competitive grant process.

Applications hand-delivered or using FED EX or UPS should use the following address:

Indiana Department of Education  
Reading First  
151 W. Ohio Street  
Indianapolis, IN 46204  
Attn: Jayma Ferguson

**No facsimile transmissions will be accepted.** Late application, an application submitted by facsimile, or an application submitted, but not in accordance with the application preparation instruction, will not be accepted and will be returned to the applicant **without review.**

## **APPLICATION PREPARATION, PAGE LIMIT, FONT SIZE, AND PACKAGING**

Applications should be prepared with the narrative portion of the proposal **no more than 30 pages in length, with a font no smaller than Times New Roman 12 point**. All application pages must be securely stapled. Special bindings and binders should **not** be used. Support documents are not counted in the 30-page limit. Supplementary materials such as commercial publications and videotapes will not be reviewed and will be returned. **Incomplete applications will not be reviewed. Applications exceeding the page limit and/or specifications will receive a reduction in points.**

## **NON-DISCRIMINATION AND OTHER COMPLIANCE WITH LAW**

Applications must include a statement of assurance of compliance with all federal and state laws and regulations prohibiting discrimination, with all requirements and assurances for the Indiana Reading First grant.

## **AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT**

The Indiana Department of Education is committed to providing equal access to all persons in admission to, or operation of its programs or services. Individuals with disabilities needing accommodations for effective participation in the grant program are invited to contact the Department for assistance.

## **ASSISTANCE**

The Indiana Department of Education issues the instructions contained in these materials, which is the sole point of contact for this program. Questions regarding applications should be directed to Jayma Ferguson, Reading First Director, at (317) 232-9152, or [jferguso@doe.state.in.us](mailto:jferguso@doe.state.in.us).

## **TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE APPLICATION WORKSHOPS**

The first technical assistance workshop was held for the 65 eligible school corporations:

DATE: February 13, 2003  
 TIME: 8:00 a.m. – 3:45 p.m.  
 PLACE: Fountain Conference Center  
 Carmel, IN

The second technical assistance workshop will be available to the school corporations completing a signed Intent to Participate:

DATE: March 5, 2003  
 TIME: 8:00 a.m.- 3:00 p.m.  
 PLACE: Fountains Conference Center  
 Carmel, IN

## II. REVIEW PROCESS INFORMATION

### REVIEW PROCESS

All applications will be evaluated using a peer review system. The expert team of reviewers will be selected from LEAs, professional organizations, community and social agencies, and university staff. Their backgrounds and expertise in professional development, leadership, assessment, curriculum, reading instruction, scientifically based reading research, the five components of reading, and teacher education will directly relate to the basis of the Reading First grant process. Each team will consist of two or three individuals with collective expertise in the above areas. A two or three member team from representative backgrounds will review and rate each proposal.

The award selections will be based on merit and quality, as determined by points awarded for the criteria section and all relevant information. The proposals will be evaluated according to the Criteria for Review of District Applications. Districts must meet all program requirements in order to receive funding. The “Meets Standard” column describes the conditions that subgrants **must have** to be considered for funding. The “Exemplary” column describes conditions that, when met in addition to those listed under “Meets Standard,” would be expected to result in the highest quality Reading First programs and will receive additional points from the reviewers. The State will award subgrants only to Districts with proposals that show promise for successful implementation, particularly at the classroom level, and for raising student achievement.

Only those proposals meeting all the identified criteria, and not exceeding the total amount of funds available for each program, will be recommended for funding. Applicants will be notified in writing of the status of their applications.



